

## HANDSTITCHED IN ITALY

I could walk you  
as I walked the streets of Rome  
the broken rhythm near the  
baths of Caraculla  
sprinting along the Via Appia Nuova  
midnight and backwards

A question of tapping of high heels  
down the Piazza di Spagna  
at night after the flowerstalls  
are shrouded  
The mystery of the Roman princes and  
their ladies nibbling on osso bucco  
in the communist backrooms of trattorias

Mention of black sneakers whis-  
pering down the Via Margutta  
near long-haired balconies  
like the heartbeat

All the while back to you  
walking you like the three-ring circus  
walks its Russian tightrope people  
near the Porto Portese  
ah the celebration the fuss  
the reporters mumbling 'one world'  
at the suede Russians and one  
face of one vast child  
out there under a real tent  
with the skin shoes tiptapping

All the while sprinting backwards to you  
and your Italianate memories  
or where were you last time round  
when you were the counterman at  
the latticeria and you were  
a new Pope bestowing infant smirks  
on my blackstocking legs  
the sound of huzzahs and dicta

It is not hypocrisy if the soles  
are from Florence and therefore cheaper  
The better to walk you with  
my dear Caesar  
It is easier than Viareggio cliffs  
victory has no pretended wings  
Once moving one can run here as  
air and leather grow thicker inland  
You become more visible

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